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AUTHOR Holmes, Robyn M.
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ABSTRACT

Young children's knowledge of race and ethnicity is conveyed in their own terms, and how this knowledge affects their social relationships and ideas about procreation is explored. Participant observation, informal conversations, and collecting children's artwork were used to build a picture of race through the eyes of the kindergarten child. Between 1986 and 1992 a visit was made to 5 kindergarten classes with a combined enrollment of 102 children (44 African American, 42 European American, 12 Latino, and 4 of other ethnic background, and 54 girls and 48 boys). Although there were differences in social demographics and racial variability in these urban and suburban schools, the tone and atmosphere of the classes were similar. No interracial or intraracial physical confrontation was ever observed. The general lack of racial tension observed with these young children from racially diverse schools was facilitated by the age and cognitive abilities of the children studied, and school curricula that provided ample opportunities for small cooperative group interactions that led to early positive experiences with racial outgroup members. (Contains 276 references.) (SLD)

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